



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
District of Maryland*

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November 22, 2019

**VIA EMAIL**

C. Justin Brown.  
1 North Charles Street, Suite 1301  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Re: United States v. Carlos Ventura Morales  
Criminal No. JKB-16-0259 (D. Md.)

Dear Counsel:

This letter, together with the Sealed Supplement, confirms the plea agreement (this "Agreement") that has been offered to your client, **Carlos Ventura Morales** (hereinafter "Defendant"), by the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Maryland ("this Office"). The terms of the Agreement are as follows:

Offense of Conviction

1. The Defendant agrees to plead guilty to Count One of the Third Superseding Indictment, which charges the Defendant with Conspiracy to Participate in a Racketeering Enterprise, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1962(d). The Defendant admits that the Defendant is, in fact, guilty of the offense and will so advise the Court.

Elements of the Offense

2. The elements of the offense to which the Defendant has agreed to plead guilty, and which this Office would prove if the case went to trial, are as follows: That beginning in or about 2015 through in or about 2017, in the District of Maryland,

Count One (RICO Conspiracy): On or about the time alleged in the Indictment, in the District of Maryland:

(1) an enterprise, MS-13, existed, consisting of a group of persons associated together for a common purpose of engaging in a course of conduct;

(2) the Enterprise engaged in, or its activities in some way affected, interstate or foreign commerce;

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(3) the Defendant was associated with the Enterprise;

(4) the Defendant knowingly and intentionally entered into an agreement that a conspirator would conduct, or participate in the conduct of, the affairs of the Enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity; and

(5) the Defendant agreed a conspirator would commit at least two acts of racketeering in the conduct of the affairs of the Enterprise.

#### Penalties

3. The maximum penalties provided by statute for the offense to which the Defendant is pleading guilty are as follows:

COUNT	STATUTE	MAND. MIN. IMPRISON-MENT	MAX IMPRISON-MENT	MAX SUPERVISED RELEASE	MAX FINE	SPECIAL ASSESS-MENT
6	18 U.S.C. § 1962(d)	N/A	20 years	3 years	\$250,000	\$100

a. Prison: If the Court orders a term of imprisonment, the Bureau of Prisons has sole discretion to designate the institution at which it will be served.

b. Supervised Release: If the Court orders a term of supervised release, and the Defendant violates the conditions of supervised release, the Court may order the Defendant returned to custody to serve a term of imprisonment up to the entire original term of supervised release if permitted by statute, followed by an additional term of supervised release.

c. Restitution: The Court may order the Defendant to pay restitution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §§ 3663, 3663A, and 3664.

d. Payment: If a fine or restitution is imposed, it shall be payable immediately, unless the Court orders otherwise under 18 U.S.C. § 3572(d). The Defendant may be required to pay interest if the fine is not paid when due.

e. Forfeiture: The Court may enter an order of forfeiture of assets directly traceable to the offense, substitute assets, and/or a money judgment equal to the value of the property subject to forfeiture.

f. Collection of Debts: If the Court imposes a fine or restitution, this Office's Financial Litigation Unit will be responsible for collecting the debt. If the Court establishes a schedule of payments, the Defendant agrees that: (1) the full amount of the fine or restitution is nonetheless due and owing immediately; (2) the schedule of payments is merely a minimum schedule of payments and not the only method, nor a limitation on the methods, available to the United States to enforce the judgment; and (3) the United States may fully employ all powers to collect on the total amount of the debt as provided by law. Until the debt is paid, the Defendant agrees to disclose all assets in which the Defendant has any interest or over which the Defendant exercises direct or indirect control. Until the money judgment is satisfied, the Defendant

authorizes this Office to obtain a credit report in order to evaluate the Defendant's ability to pay, and to request and review the Defendant's federal and state income tax returns. The Defendant agrees to complete and sign a copy of IRS Form 8821 (relating to the voluntary disclosure of federal tax return information) and a financial statement in a form provided by this Office.

Waiver of Rights

4. The Defendant understands that by entering into this Agreement, the Defendant surrenders certain rights as outlined below:

a. If the Defendant had pled not guilty and persisted in that plea, the Defendant would have had the right to a speedy jury trial with the close assistance of competent counsel. That trial could be conducted by a judge, without a jury, if the Defendant, this Office, and the Court all agreed.

b. If the Defendant elected a jury trial, the jury would be composed of twelve individuals selected from the community. Counsel and the Defendant would have the opportunity to challenge prospective jurors who demonstrated bias or who were otherwise unqualified, and would have the opportunity to strike a certain number of jurors peremptorily. All twelve jurors would have to agree unanimously before the Defendant could be found guilty of any count. The jury would be instructed that the Defendant was presumed to be innocent, and that presumption could be overcome only by proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

c. If the Defendant went to trial, the government would have the burden of proving the Defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. The Defendant would have the right to confront and cross-examine the government's witnesses. The Defendant would not have to present any defense witnesses or evidence whatsoever. If the Defendant wanted to call witnesses in defense, however, the Defendant would have the subpoena power of the Court to compel the witnesses to attend.

d. The Defendant would have the right to testify in the Defendant's own defense if the Defendant so chose, and the Defendant would have the right to refuse to testify. If the Defendant chose not to testify, the Court could instruct the jury that they could not draw any adverse inference from the Defendant's decision not to testify.

e. If the Defendant were found guilty after a trial, the Defendant would have the right to appeal the verdict and the Court's pretrial and trial decisions on the admissibility of evidence to see if any errors were committed which would require a new trial or dismissal of the charges. By pleading guilty, the Defendant knowingly gives up the right to appeal the verdict and the Court's decisions.

f. By pleading guilty, the Defendant will be giving up all of these rights, except the right, under the limited circumstances set forth in the "Waiver of Appeal" paragraph below, to appeal the sentence. By pleading guilty, the Defendant understands that the Defendant may have to answer the Court's questions both about the rights being given up and about the facts of the case. Any statements that the Defendant makes during such a hearing would not be admissible against the Defendant during a trial except in a criminal proceeding for perjury or false statement.

g. If the Court accepts the Defendant's plea of guilty, the Defendant will be giving up the right to file and have the Court rule on pretrial motions, and there will be no further trial or proceeding of any kind in the above-referenced criminal case, and the Court will find the Defendant guilty.

h. By pleading guilty, the Defendant will also be giving up certain valuable civil rights and will be subject to deportation or other loss of immigration status, including possible denaturalization. The Defendant recognizes that he is not a citizen of the United States, or a naturalized citizen, and pleading guilty will likely result in his deportation. Under federal law, conviction for a broad range of crimes can lead to adverse immigration consequences, including automatic removal from the United States. Removal and other immigration consequences are the subject of a separate proceeding, however, and the Defendant understands that no one, including the Defendant's attorney or the Court, can predict with certainty the effect of a conviction on immigration status. The Defendant is not relying on any promise or belief about the immigration consequences of pleading guilty. The Defendant nevertheless affirms that the Defendant wants to plead guilty regardless of any potential immigration consequences.

Advisory Sentencing Guidelines Apply

5. The Defendant understands that the Court will determine a sentencing guidelines range for this case (henceforth the "advisory guidelines range") pursuant to the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 at 18 U.S.C. § 3551-3742 (excepting 18 U.S.C. § 3553(b)(1) and 3742(e)) and 28 U.S.C. §§ 991 through 998. The Defendant further understands that the Court will impose a sentence pursuant to the Sentencing Reform Act, as excised, and must take into account the advisory guidelines range in establishing a reasonable sentence.

Factual and Advisory Guidelines Stipulation

6. This Office and the Defendant stipulate and agree to the Statement of Facts set forth in Attachment A, which is incorporated by reference herein. This Office and the Defendant further agree to the following applicable sentencing guideline factors:

a. This Office and the Defendant further agree that that pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 2E1.1(a), the offense level for racketeering conspiracy is the greater of offense level 19 or the offense level applicable to the underlying racketeering activity. This Office and the Defendant stipulate and agree that pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 1B1.3, the underlying racketeering activities in this case involve acts, committed, aided, abetted, counseled, commanded, induced, or willfully caused by the Defendant, as well as all those acts reasonably foreseeable to him in furtherance of the jointly undertaken criminal enterprise, and include, among others:

- i. Interference with interstate commerce by extortion, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951; and
- ii. Conspiracy to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute marijuana, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 846(b)(1)(A).

- b. With respect to the interference with interstate commerce by extortion, the base offense level is 20 pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 2B3.1(a). With respect to the conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute marijuana, the base offense is 6 pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 2D1.1(c)(17).
- c. Pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 2E1.1 n.1, each underlying racketeering offense is treated as a separate count of conviction. The parties agree that the total offense level is 20 pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 3D1.4.
- d. This Office does not oppose a two-level reduction in the Defendant's adjusted offense level, based upon the Defendant's apparent prompt recognition and affirmative acceptance of personal responsibility for his criminal conduct pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 3E1.1(a). This Office also agrees to make a motion pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 3E1.1(b) for an additional one-level decrease in recognition of the Defendant's timely notification of his intention to plead guilty.
- e. **Therefore, the total offense level is 17.**

7. There is no agreement as to the Defendant's criminal history and the Defendant understands that the Defendant's criminal history could alter the Defendant's offense level. Specifically, the Defendant understands that the Defendant's criminal history could alter the final offense level if the Defendant is determined to be a career offender or if the instant offense was a part of a pattern of criminal conduct from which the Defendant derived a substantial portion of the Defendant's income. The Defendant agrees the Defendant will not raise any argument that any specific prior conviction is not a predicate for a career offender designation under U.S.S.G. § 4B1.1.

8. Other than as set forth above, no other offense characteristics, sentencing guidelines factors, potential departures or adjustments set forth in the United States Sentencing Guidelines are in dispute or will be raised in calculating the advisory guidelines range.

#### Obligations of the Parties

9. At the time of sentencing, this Office and the Defendant reserve the right to advocate for a reasonable sentence, period of supervised release, and/or fine considering any appropriate factors under 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a). This Office reserves the right to bring to the Court's attention all information with respect to the Defendant's background, character, and conduct that this Office deems relevant to sentencing, including the conduct that is the subject of any counts of the Indictment. At the time of sentencing, this Office will move to dismiss any open counts against the Defendant.

#### Waiver of Appeal

10. In exchange for the concessions made by this Office and the Defendant in this Agreement, this Office and the Defendant waive their rights to appeal as follows:

a. The Defendant knowingly waives all right, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1291 or any other statute or constitutional provision, to appeal the Defendant's conviction on any ground whatsoever. This includes a waiver of all right to appeal the Defendant's conviction on the ground that the statute(s) to which the Defendant is pleading guilty is unconstitutional, or on the ground that the admitted conduct does not fall within the scope of the statute(s).

b. The Defendant and this Office knowingly and expressly waive all rights conferred by 18 U.S.C. § 3742 to appeal whatever sentence is imposed (including any term of imprisonment, fine, term of supervised release, or order of restitution) for any reason (including the establishment of the advisory sentencing guidelines range, the determination of the Defendant's criminal history, the weighing of the sentencing factors, and any constitutional challenges to the calculation and imposition of any term of imprisonment, fine, order of forfeiture, order of restitution, and term or condition of supervised release).

c. The Defendant waives any and all rights under the Freedom of Information Act relating to the investigation and prosecution of the above-captioned matter and agrees not to file any request for documents from this Office or any investigating agency.

Defendant's Conduct Prior to Sentencing and Breach

11. a. Between now and the date of the sentencing, the Defendant will not engage in conduct that constitutes obstruction of justice under U.S.S.G. § 3C1.1; will not violate any federal, state, or local law; will acknowledge guilt to the probation officer and the Court; will be truthful in any statement to the Court, this Office, law enforcement agents, and probation officers; will cooperate in the preparation of the presentence report; and will not move to withdraw from the plea of guilty or from this Agreement.

b. If the Defendant engages in conduct prior to sentencing that violates the above paragraph of this Agreement, and the Court finds a violation by a preponderance of the evidence, then: (i) this Office will be free from its obligations under this Agreement; (ii) this Office may make sentencing arguments and recommendations different from those set out in this Agreement, even if the Agreement was reached pursuant to Rule 11(c)(1)(C); and (iii) in any criminal or civil proceeding, this Office will be free to use against the Defendant all statements made by the Defendant and any of the information or materials provided by the Defendant, including statements, information, and materials provided pursuant to this Agreement, and statements made during proceedings before the Court pursuant to Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. A determination that this Office is released from its obligations under this Agreement will not permit the Defendant to withdraw the guilty plea. The Defendant acknowledges that the Defendant may not withdraw the Defendant's guilty plea—even if made pursuant to Rule 11(c)(1)(C)—if the Court finds that the Defendant breached the Agreement. In that event, neither the Court nor the Government will be bound by the specific sentence or sentencing range agreed and stipulated to herein pursuant to Rule 11(c)(1)(C).

Court Not a Party

12. The Defendant expressly understands that the Court is not a party to this agreement.

In the federal system, the sentence to be imposed is within the sole discretion of the Court. In particular, the Defendant understands that neither the United States Probation Office nor the Court is bound by the stipulation set forth above, and that the Court will, with the aid of the Presentence Report, determine the facts relevant to sentencing. The Defendant understands that the Court cannot rely exclusively upon the stipulation in ascertaining the factors relevant to the determination of sentence. Rather, in determining the factual basis for the sentence, the Court will consider the stipulation, together with the results of the presentence investigation, and any other relevant information. The Defendant understands that the Court is under no obligation to accept this Office's recommendations, and the Court has the power to impose a sentence up to and including the statutory maximum stated above. The Defendant understands that if the Court ascertains factors different from those contained in the stipulation set forth above, or if the Court should impose any sentence up to the maximum established by statute, the Defendant cannot, for that reason alone, withdraw his guilty plea, and will remain bound to fulfill all of his obligations under this agreement. The Defendant understands that neither the prosecutor, his counsel, nor the Court can make a binding prediction, promise, or representation as to what guidelines range or sentence the Defendant will receive. The Defendant agrees that no one has made such a binding prediction or promise.

Entire Agreement

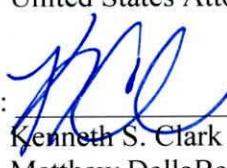
13. This letter, together with the Sealed Supplement, constitutes the complete plea agreement in this case. This letter, together with the Sealed Supplement, supersedes any prior understandings, promises, or conditions between this Office and the Defendant. There are no other agreements, promises, undertakings, or understandings between the Defendant and this Office other than those set forth in this letter and the Sealed Supplement. No changes to this Agreement will be effective unless in writing, signed by all parties and approved by the Court.

If the Defendant fully accepts each and every term and condition of this Agreement, please sign and have the Defendant sign the original and return it to me promptly.

Very truly yours,

Robert K. Hur  
United States Attorney

By:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth S. Clark  
Matthew DellaBetta  
Catherine K. Dick  
Assistant United States Attorneys

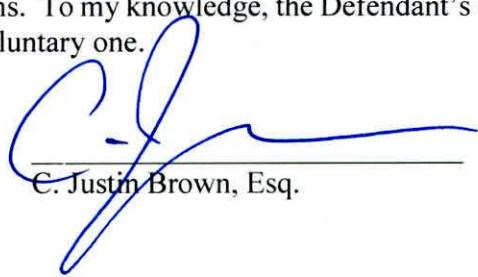
I have read and/or have had read to me by a Spanish speaking interpreter this agreement and carefully reviewed every part of it with my attorney and an interpreter. I understand it, and I voluntarily agree to it. Specifically, I have reviewed and/or have had read to me by a Spanish speaking interpreter the Factual and Advisory Guidelines Stipulation with my attorney, and I do not wish to change any part of it. I am completely satisfied with the representation of my attorney.

01/03/20  
Date

  
Carlos Ventura Morales

I am the Defendant's attorney. I have carefully reviewed every part of this Agreement, including the Sealed Supplement with the Defendant. The Defendant advises me that the Defendant understands and accepts its terms. To my knowledge, the Defendant's decision to enter into this Agreement is an informed and voluntary one.

1/13/2020  
Date

  
C. Justin Brown, Esq.

**ATTACHMENT A****STIPULATION OF FACTS**

The undersigned parties stipulate and agree that if this case had proceeded to trial, this Office would have proven the following facts beyond a reasonable doubt. The undersigned parties also stipulate and agree that the following facts do not encompass all of the evidence that would have been presented had this matter proceeded to trial.

*La Mara Salvatrucha*, a/k/a the MS-13 gang (“MS-13”), is a gang composed primarily of immigrants or descendants of immigrants from El Salvador, with members operating in the State of Maryland, including Montgomery County and Prince George’s County, and throughout the United States. In the United States, MS-13 has been functioning since at least the 1980s. MS-13 originated in Los Angeles, California, where MS-13 members banded together for protection against the larger Mexican groups. MS-13 evolved into a gang that engaged in turf wars for the control of drug distribution locations. MS-13 quickly spread to states across the country, including Maryland. MS-13 is a national and international criminal organization and is one of the largest street gangs in the United States. Gang members actively recruit members, including juveniles, from communities with a large number of Salvadorian immigrants.

At all relevant times, members of MS-13 were expected to protect the name, reputation, and status of the gang from rival gang members and other persons. MS-13 members required that all individuals show respect and deference to the gang and its membership. To protect the gang and to enhance its reputation, MS-13 members were expected to use any means necessary to force respect from those who showed disrespect, including acts of intimidation and violence.

At all relevant times, members and associates of MS-13 frequently engaged in criminal activity, including, but not limited to, murder, assault, kidnaping, robbery, extortion, obstruction of justice and threatening, intimidating and retaliating against witnesses, the distribution of controlled substances, as well as attempts and conspiracies to commit such offenses. MS-13 members were required to commit acts of violence both to maintain membership and discipline within the gang and against rival gangs. Participation in criminal activity by a member, particularly violent acts directed at rival gangs or as directed by the gang leadership, increased the respect accorded to that member, resulted in that member maintaining or increasing his position in the gang, and opened the door to a promotion to a leadership position. One of the principal rules of MS-13 was that its members must attack and kill rivals whenever possible. Rivals are often referred to as “chavalas.” MS-13, in the areas of Frederick County, Anne Arundel County, Montgomery County, and other areas of Maryland, maintain rivalries with the 18<sup>th</sup> Street Gang, Latin Kings, Adelphi Crew, and the Lewisdale Crew, among others.

MS-13 is an international criminal organization, and is organized in Maryland and elsewhere into “cliques,” that is, smaller groups operating in a specific city or region. Cliques operated under the umbrella rules of MS-13. MS-13 cliques often work together cooperatively to engage in criminal activity and to assist one another in avoiding detection by law enforcement. In Maryland and the surrounding area, these cliques included Fulton Locos Salvatruchas (“FLS”), Molinos Locos Salvatruchas (“MLS”), Sailors Locotes Salvatrucha Westside (“SLSW”), Parkview Locotes Salvatrucha (“PVLS”), Normandie Locotes Salvatruchas (“NLS”), Weedons

Locotes Salvatrucha (“WLS”), Peajes Locotes Salvatrucha (“PLS”) and Langley Park Salvatruchas (“LPS”).

MS-13, including its leadership, membership, and associates, constituted an enterprise as defined in 18 U.S.C. §§ 1961(4) and 1959(b)(2), that is, a group of individuals associated in fact that engaged in, and the activities of which affected, interstate and foreign commerce (“the Enterprise”). The Enterprise constituted an ongoing organization whose members functioned as a continuing unit for a common purpose of achieving the objectives of the Enterprise. The purposes of the Enterprise include the following:

- a. Preserving and protecting the power, territory, and profits of the Enterprise through the use of intimidation and violence, including assaults, murders, and threats of violence;
- b. Promoting and enhancing the Enterprise and its members’ and associates’ activities;
- c. Enriching the members and associates of the Enterprise through extortion and the sale of illegal controlled substances;
- d. Keeping victims and potential witnesses in fear of the Enterprise and in fear of its members and associates through threats of violence and actual violence; and
- e. Providing assistance to members and associates, in order to hinder, obstruct and prevent law enforcement officers from identifying offenders, apprehending offenders, and trying and punishing offenders.

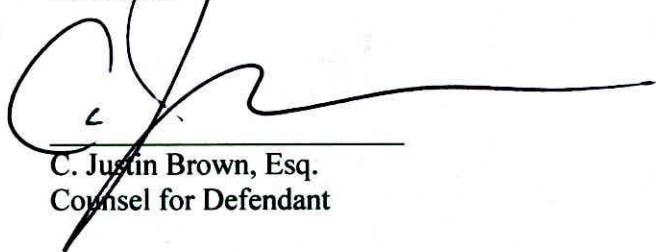
From an unknown time but in or about 2015, the Defendant, **CARLOS VENTURA MORALES**, was a member and associate of the FLS clique of MS-13. From 2015 through 2017, members of the Fulton clique engaged in the distribution of marijuana on behalf of MS-13 in the District of Maryland. Members of the Fulton clique also extorted money from legitimate and illegitimate businesses that operated in the gang’s perceived “territory.” During 2015, **VENTURA MORALES** regularly participated in the extortion of money from legitimate businesses and illegitimate businesses based on threats of violence. Because some of these businesses were engaged in interstate commerce, the Defendant’s actions affected interstate commerce. During this same time period, **VENTURA MORALES** regularly sold marijuana in street-level quantities. The gang would obtain bulk quantities of marijuana from sources in Maryland, California, and other states. Those would then be broken down into smaller quantities and re-sold for a profit. **VENTURA MORALES** would turn over the proceeds from his extortion activities and drug dealing to gang leadership so the money could be used to further gang’s activities through the purchase of weapons, phones, and the provision of money to incarcerated gang members.

SO STIPULATED:

DATED:

  
Kenneth S. Clark  
Matthew DellaBetta  
Catherine K. Dick  
Assistant United States Attorney

  
Carlos Ventura Morales  
Defendant

  
C. Justin Brown, Esq.  
Counsel for Defendant